

From the Land

CONN. COLLEGE
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NEW LONDON, CONN.

SUMMER/1978



Red Fox

(Duffy Schade photo)

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The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter

FROM THE LAND

Summer/1978

Published for the members of
The Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy
Evan Griswold, *Executive Director*
Susan Cooley, *Director of Stewardship*
Lindy Barnett, *Administrative Assistant*
Anna Barron, *Secretary for Stewardship & Recording Secretary*
Winifred Wright, *Master Plan Coordinator*
Alden Taylor, *Editor*

RED FOX (VULPES FULVA)

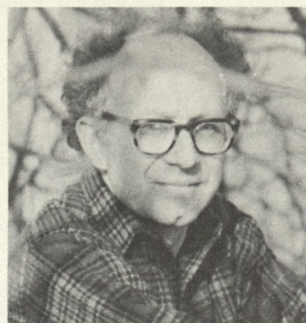


The Red Fox is 22-25 inches long and weighs 10-15 lbs. There are many color variations but they are normally reddish yellow. They are carnivorous mammals who mainly eat mice, frogs, insects and berries. The Red Fox prefers broken, sparsely settled country and can be found over most of the eastern deciduous forest.

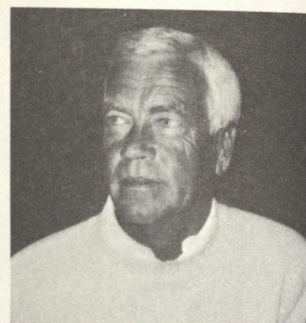
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1978 ANNUAL MEETING



Peter Cooper



Alden Taylor

Members attending the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Chapter enjoyed the lovely setting of Dr. and Mrs. Charles F. Sornberger's yard in Scotland, Connecticut, with a backdrop of stonewalls and flower beds. The business meeting proceeded under grey skies, punctuated by an occasional growl of thunder.

Peter Cooper was elected chairman, Peter Neill to Vice Chairman and Mrs. Marjorie Elting was elected a trustee.

Alden Taylor stepped down from his position as chairman of the Board of Trustees. He served a three-year term of able and enthusiastic guidance which marked the smooth transition from an old to entirely new staff of four — all inside of one year.

Our new chairman, Peter Cooper, has taken over the lead and is reorganizing the Board of Trustees in several smaller subcommittees. These groups will help streamline Chapter activities, including planning and policy, finance and fundraising and membership.

Following the outdoor meeting, the clouds rolled in with rain. Lunch in the barn was graced with an excellent slide show by Bill Stocking, member of the stewardship committee for the 440-acre Rock Spring Wildlife Refuge in Scotland. (His pictures of the American west rival the best that National Geographic has to offer.)

While the trustees' meeting lingered over financial matters, the more courageous of the members set off with Ed Ruffleth to see a partial glimpse of the Wildlife Refuge. Sadly, the cloudbursts made sightseeing impossible.

CHAPTER LOSES A GREAT FRIEND

The Connecticut Chapter was saddened to learn that Happy Kitchel Egler passed away on July 6th, after a prolonged illness. A long-time and loyal friend of The Nature Conservancy, Happy Egler was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut Chapter and a major force in developing sound stewardship guidelines for Conservancy preserves throughout the state. Happy and her husband Dr. Frank E. Egler have worked tirelessly for the protection and scientific use of Conservancy lands in the Norfolk and Colebrook areas, as well as carrying out their own research projects. It is with great sorrow that the Chapter marks the loss of Happy Egler.

STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM STILL SEEKS FUNDING

Completing a summer of great activity, eight interns can boast of numerous successes. Three more preserves have been inventoried — we now know in some detail about the topography, drainage, geology, soils, plants, and animals of these preserves. We also have researched past land uses and are up to date on zoning regulations and present surrounding activities. We have developed land ownership maps that show in a flash who our neighbors are and point out possible areas for additions to the preserves. This summer also provided us with three special projects on the geology of the Housatonic Highlands in Kent, bird nesting censuses at Sunny Valley Preserve, small mammals studies at three other preserves in western Connecticut.

All this information leads to a well-developed management plan based on factual data. After this summer's efforts we have completed ten master plans — both inventory and long-term management plan. Once edited, a sample master plan will be duplicated and mailed out to all committees to provide a useful guide in the preparation of other master plans. We are aiming to complete all master plans by 1980 (see *Master Plans* article in this issue).

All of this work takes time, and as part of the Student Internship Program, it takes money. S.I.P.'s budget includes salaries for students, secretary, and coordinator and the expenses of telephone, travel, postage, typing, and xeroxing. It amounts to a healthy \$15,000. To date we have been successful in raising about \$9,000. In the next few months as the reports and master plans are edited and made available to stewardship committees we will need to raise the last \$6,000.

Can we look to you for a tax-deductible contribution? An envelope is included.

Susan Cooley

1978 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

1978 is a special year for Conservancy Chapters throughout the country and especially here in Connecticut. The National Board of Governors voted early this year to allow Chapters to keep 100% of the funds raised from new members brought in during 1978 by the Chapters themselves. Ordinarily, Chapters split membership dues 50-50 with the National Office. With nearly 3,000 conservation-minded friends as dues-paying members of the Connecticut Chapter, we have a tremendous and exciting opportunity to raise our membership level, thus providing more support for preserving natural diversity in Connecticut.

Enclosed in your copy of this issue of *From the Land* is a membership envelope. Membership dues will help to buy

more significant areas that might otherwise be lost. Please use the envelope to enlist a friend or relative to join us in becoming preservation activists and in reaping other tangible benefits of Conservancy membership. Won't you help our family grow?



SUMMER AT SPIDERWEED



(Clifton Read photo)

Many pleasant memories remain from my summer at Spiderweed. The peace and quiet of the "retreat" was quite a relief from the hustle and bustle of Middletown. One of the highlights was stalking the famous worm-eating warblers nesting in the dense vegetation on the perimeter of the field. They were unfortunately quite elusive when interested visitors sought them out. The variety of habitats provided me with a summer's total of over 50 bird species.

Work around Spiderweed, both inside the house and out, was an ongoing project. Early in the summer George Zimmerman of Middletown painted the house while I planted a vegetable garden. As the summer extended I began to clear the land around the house. With the help of a dozen local highschool kids working under the Youth Services CETA grant, we cut the brush from the fields surrounding the house, mowed the lawns, and cleaned the flower beds.

An excellent start was made on the preserve management plan which will be instituted and carried out by the recently revitalized Stewardship Committee with which I had the pleasure of working and developing the Master Plan.

Clifton R. Read, Summer intern

FAST ACTION SAVES OSPREY



(Jean Sargent photo)

Left to right: David Sargent, Al Nodden and Tony Palmer

We had begun to wonder whether our baby osprey was retarded! All the other osprey fledglings along the Connecticut shore had long since left their nests, but this one — the first to be hatched in our area in many years — was still apparently unable to fly. Then one cool, mid-August morning we learned the reason why.

We had arranged to meet with Rachel Hammerton, student intern for The Nature Conservancy, for a 6:00 A.M. bird walk. When we first passed the osprey nest, all was serene; but a half hour later, when we returned, it was a different story. The baby osprey was then upside down, hanging helplessly by its feet from the 35 foot platform on which the osprey nest rested. It was a pathetic sight as it hung there, occasionally arching its neck and frantically flapping its great wings.

Rachel's first impulse was to try shinnying up the 35 foot pole — but that seemed a little hazardous. A few frantic phone calls were to no avail, and meanwhile precious minutes were slipping by. It was then that we called Connecticut Light and Power Company. It was still early, but the dispatcher sensed the urgency of our appeal, and in short order a rescue truck was on the scene.

Tony Palmer, lineman for CL&P, aimed the aerial hydraulic ladder from his truck to the top of the tall pole, and within seconds he had grasped the wild bird firmly by its feet. Holding it aloft in one hand, he precariously descended the ladder to the ground. It was then that we learned the cause of its plight and the reason it had been unable to fly. Both its feet and its neck were cruelly enmeshed in a taut tangle of fishing line which had also become snagged to the nest.

It was a magnificent bird and it took two men to hold the great wings while a third cut loose the lines which had entangled it.

Tony then carried the struggling bird up the ladder to the nest, but being frightened, it then toppled off the platform and plunged to the pond below, landing upside down. With great effort it was able to right itself, and alternately resting and flapping its wings in the shallow water, it gradually reached the edge of the pond. However, the tall reeds and grasses denied it access to the shore. We then launched a

light canoe and picked up the struggling bird, bringing it safely to shore, where we set it down in an open field below the nest.

Since the bird did not move from this vulnerable position, we feared for its safety and decided to try once again to resettle it on the nest. Holding the osprey by the feet, Tony climbed back up the ladder and placed it on the nest, but this time he held it quietly there for a few moments and the bird stayed. We all then departed to permit the circling adults to take charge.

Two days later, thanks to the prompt and dedicated response of the men from CL&P, the young osprey was happily aloft, swooping low over the pond and testing its great wings in the ecstasy of flight.

David Sargent

GRISWOLD POINT DEDICATION CEREMONY

A ceremony dedicating the Griswold Point Preserve in Old Lyme was held at the home of John Griswold overlooking the Preserve. Conservancy President Patrick Noonan flew up from Arlington for the occasion marking the completion of the fundraising efforts to repay funds borrowed from The Nature Conservancy's Project Revolving Fund. Fundraising for stewardship costs are continuing so that the Griswold Point Stewardship Committee can continue to hire a summertime warden for the heavily-used dune and beach sanctuary.

Pat noted the remarkable history of Griswold Point which has been held by the Griswold family for over 330 years until its transfer to The Nature Conservancy in 1975.

Also of special interest was the fact that the protection of the sandspit, coupled with increased environmental health of the Connecticut River, has produced an exciting comeback of threatened birds nesting on or near Griswold Point Preserve. A dozen or more least terns were successfully hatched and fledged this summer thanks to the efforts of Phil Clark, who cordoned off the nesting area and kept vigil over his new wards. Guests at the ceremony were also treated to the view of a female Osprey and her nearly fledged chick atop a platform erected earlier this year by state biologist Tom Hoehn.

Former Chapter director Charles (Scotty) Scott with his wife Judy and son Teal took a break in their vacation to drive down from the Cape. Others in attendance were Chapter Board members Peter Cooper, Alden Taylor, Peter Neill, Dick Goodwin, Emma Angier as well as members of the Griswold family, friends and members of the stewardship committee. Committee member Roger Tory Peterson remarked on the resurgence of nesting Ospreys in the lower Connecticut, a sign that the River may be getting cleaner.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM PROPOSED FOR CONNECTICUT

A proposal to establish a State Natural Heritage Program for Connecticut has been submitted by The Nature Conservancy to the Department of Environmental Protection. The proposed program would provide the vehicle to update and utilize existing information on the state's diverse natural heritage and to add to that information through systematic data gathering and storage. The result of such a program will be a better working knowledge of the overall diversity of species in the state, their numbers, and their protection status. This knowledge will hopefully spawn efforts to identify elements of the natural world that are inadequately protected and lead to the protection of the critical habitat necessary for species survival.

A recent *Nature Conservancy News* (January-February 1978) covered in depth the need for a National Heritage Program which would encompass "the institution of a national policy to preserve the full array of natural diversity." In order to carry out such a policy, the Program would focus on identifying the elements of natural diversity on a state by state basis and use a variety of protection mechanisms to assure their preservation.

Back in 1972, Jimmy Carter, then Governor of Georgia, created the Georgia Heritage Trust to protect the state's natural and cultural heritage. The program was established under contract with The Nature Conservancy to identify the lands worthy of highest protection priority. Since then, eleven other states and the Tennessee Valley Authority have signed similar contracts with the Conservancy to set up their own State Natural Heritage Programs. Presently, the legislatures of both Massachusetts and Rhode Island have voted to fund similar programs which should be starting within the next few months.

Connecticut has not been idle in its efforts to inventory the state's natural heritage. In 1971, the Connecticut Forest and Park association, with a grant from the New England Natural Resources Center, undertook a survey of Connecticut natural areas, classifying sites under major categories of geologic, hydrologic, biologic, and aesthetic criteria. The result of this inventory was a listing of over 350 sites deemed to have some significance as natural areas. Some of the information gathered by the inventory has been used to set priorities for recommending areas for the Connecticut Natural Areas Preserve System, established by Public Act 727 in 1969. Much of it, however, has lain dormant and the status of many sites listed in the inventory is unknown. Doubtless, some have disappeared under concrete.

An update of the status of natural areas and features is needed. As natural areas become scarcer with each passing year, a constructive and responsive mechanism to protect what remains must be established. It must also answer the question, "What should we protect first?" Lack of an answer to that crucial question has cost us many irreplaceable parts of our natural heritage.

The proposed Connecticut State Natural Heritage Program outlines the structure and process by which the state can identify the areas that are truly in need of protection. Connecticut has a long history of public and private involvement in protecting its natural heritage. Witness only the large numbers of local, regional, and state-wide conservation organizations that act as watchdogs over our diverse natural resources. However, there has been no objective mechanism to tell us what is truly unique in our state and where it occurs. A Heritage Program can provide this, guiding Connecticut efforts toward protection of only the best and most significant acres of its natural landscape.

The State Natural Heritage Program differs from previous inventories in several important ways. First, the program assures that information gathered on the whereabouts and status of natural systems and entities, including threatened plants and animals, can be continually updated. Second, it allows direct, objective comparison of like systems or entities to one another so that the highest quality examples of these occurrences may be protected first. It also provides information on examples of elements that are not sufficiently protected or represented in existing sanctuaries, parks, or reserves.

The major advantage of the Heritage Program over earlier site-oriented inventories is that site identification is the result of systematic analysis of similar components rather than the subjective and arbitrary drawings of lines on a map.



Avoiding the costly confrontations that have marked environmental protection recently by providing current ecological data will perhaps be the system's greatest long-term benefit. Landowners, developers, and state and local policy makers can be alerted to specific areas that are objectively important, and plan around them.

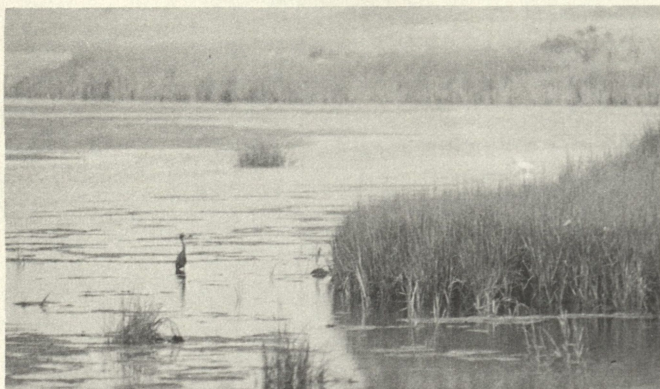
The Conservancy proposal calls for the State of Connecticut to enter into a two-year contract with TNC to set up the information system and see that it is running smoothly. At the end of the contract period, the system would be turned over to the DEP to continue the program. Heritage staff would be trained by the Conservancy and work closely with the appropriate units of the Department of Environmental Protection as well as knowledgeable researchers in the field.

The Heritage Program is an idea whose time has come. Connecticut's commitment to preserving its diverse natural heritage depends on having the right information at its disposal and knowing how to use it. Heritage will show the way.

Evan Griswold

1978 LIFE MEMBERS

MASTER PLANS



Griswold Point Preserve

(Clifton Read photo)

The Connecticut Chapter would like to welcome the following people as Life Members of The Nature Conservancy. This outstanding support provides a crucial part of the Chapter's ability to seek out and save more natural areas. This is our "Life" support in more than one way, enabling our small staff to help the many active and dedicated volunteers carry out the important work of The Nature Conservancy. We thank you.

Mr. H. L. Achilles
Mr. William J. Alford
Mrs. Emery E. Allain
Ms. Dorothy M. Barrett
Mr. and Mrs. Bowen H. McCoy
Dr. Sherman Bull
Mr. and Mrs. Theodore R. Burghart
Mrs. Charles Cook
Miss Susan D. Cooley
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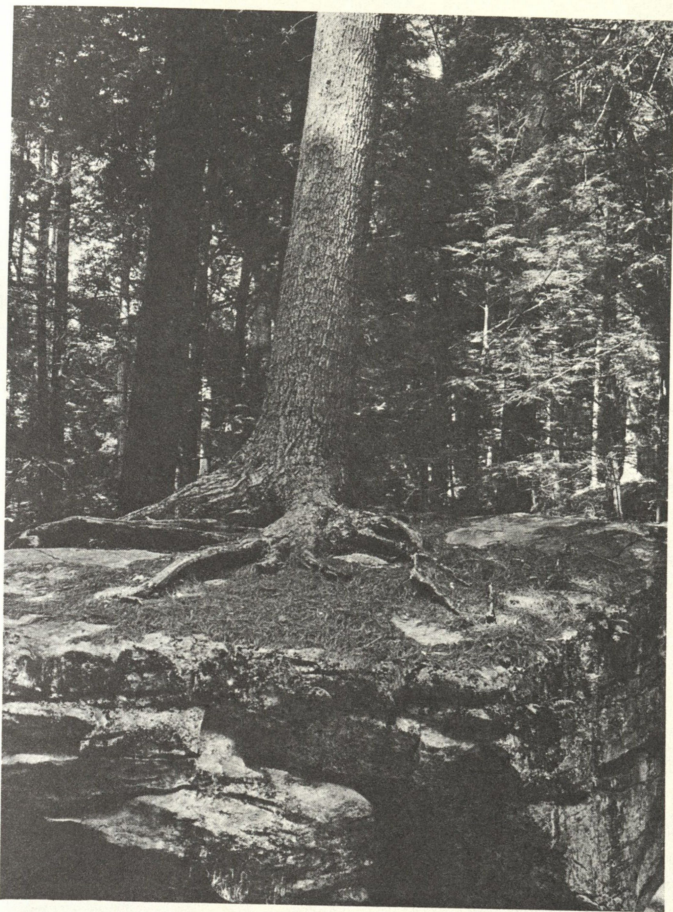
You have probably heard the term master plan often this summer and with good reason if you are on a preserve management committee. The Connecticut Chapter is making a big effort to finish stewardship plans for its properties in 1978. Two summer interns and a temporary staff member have been helping committees as they write their plans. The summer interns, Barbara Goodman, a plant ecology student who will be a senior at Connecticut College in New London, and Clifton Read, a University of New Hampshire graduate specializing in environmental education, have been working with a dozen preserve committees. Winky Wright, a planner from Concord and with the Connecticut Chapter for at least six months, is coordinating this master planning effort. All three have been sharing ideas with committee members, explaining the planning process, helping committees decide what might be done with each preserve, and then helping them write their plans.

What are master plans? Why should committees prepare them? Management committees frequently ask these questions. Master plans form the basis for stewardship. They paint a picture of the preserve, its assets and shortcomings, then describe what will be done to protect or correct its features. At the heart of the plan is information about the preserve's natural resources, generally gathered in the student internship inventory. It also includes information about the use the preserve receives and its legal status. By analyzing these data, each preserve committee decides what use the property can sustain without damage, whether fragile areas need protection, what further studies would be useful or of interest.

Grappling with the data and questions raised through the master planning process proves exciting to many committees. There are other benefits too: continuity and exchange of information. As new members join a committee or when interested people ask about the preserve, committee members have the basic information about the parcel, how it may be used, and what is being done on it.

Once the preserve management committee has written its master plan, it is sent to the Chapter Office where Susan Cooley and Winky Wright review it. It is reworked if necessary and then forwarded to the Eastern Regional Office for final approval. The Conservancy must maintain a delicate balance between protection and public benefit for each of its preserves. Stewardship can be a difficult task but is at the heart of the Conservancy's aim to set aside and care for natural areas. If you are on a preserve management committee, you know how important your job is, and we are grateful for all the work you have done. We could not operate without your dedication.

Winky Wright



Cathedral Pines 1911 by Yale Professor George Nichols



Cathedral Pines 1976 by Yale student Howard Welt

THE CHANGING FACE OF CONNECTICUT

The top photograph taken at Cathedral Pines in Cornwall shows a large white pine in the foreground. The tree is approximately 150 years old. Below the same tree, slightly wider in girth, has been photographed 65 years later (1976) by Yale Forestry School student, Howard Welt.

The difference in the photographs is impressive and to a large extent can be explained by the increased human impact on the natural area. The Appalachian Trail passes within feet of this particular tree, and the rock is a favorite perch from which to see the pine and hemlock stand. Such use shoves pine needles aside and destroys fragile mosses and ferns.

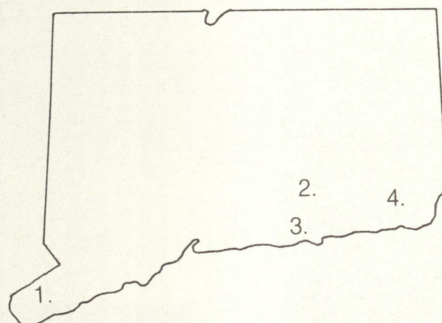
The Chapter is setting up such photostations in its preserves in order to monitor the changes that occur in its natural acres.

AUTUMN WALKS SCHEDULED FOR TURTLE CREEK, BURNHAM BROOK, PIKE AND ALTSCHUL PRESERVES

In an effort to make use of our extensive preserve system in the state and to learn more about individual sites, the Connecticut Chapter will sponsor Saturday morning interpretive walks on four of its preserves. If the response is good this autumn, we will continue to highlight several preserves in the spring.

The walks will begin at 10 A.M. rain or shine at the designated locations and will run for 1 ½ to 2 hours. Please call the office (344-0716) or your leader for the walk to let us know how many persons we may expect each trip.

Come learn more about the land we are saving for future generations to enjoy and bring a friend.

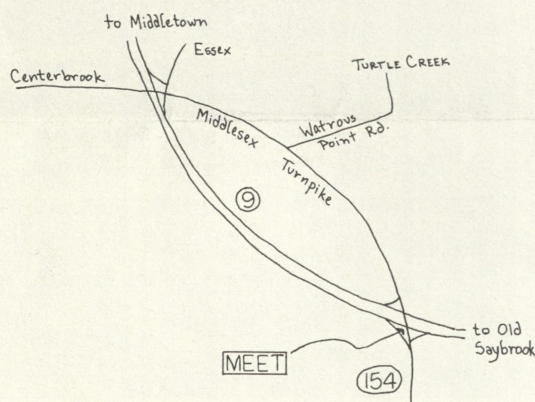


1. Altschul Preserve
2. Burnham Brook Preserve
3. Turtle Creek Wildlife Sanctuary
4. Pike Preserve

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30: TURTLE CREEK

Leader: Ms. Dominique Irvine (865-6094)

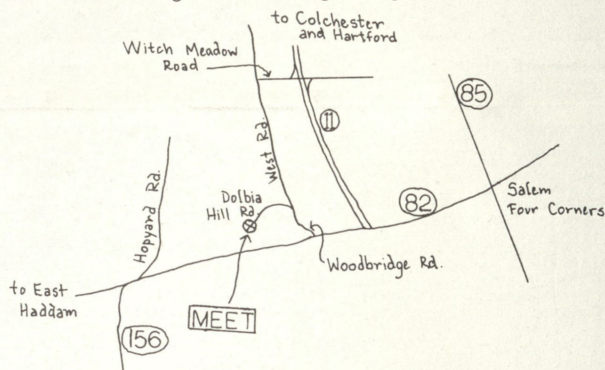
Meet at 10 A.M. at junction (underpass) of Old Middlesex Turnpike and Rte. 9. (Exit 2)



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7: BURNHAM BROOK

Leader: Dr. Richard Goodwin (873-8514)

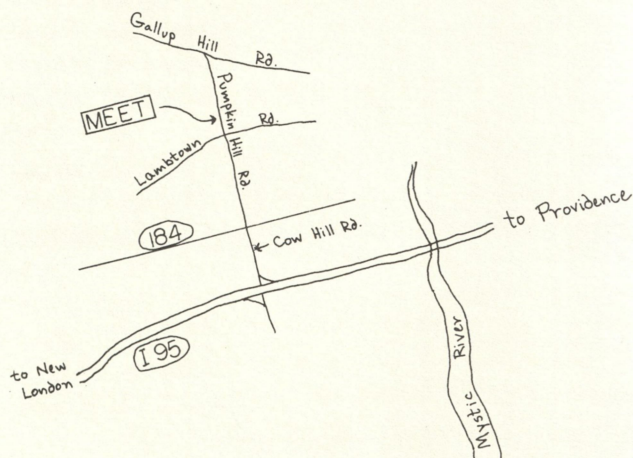
Meet at 10 A.M. at Dolbia Hill Farm. From Rte. 11 take Witch Meadow Road Exit and travel west. Go south on West Road for approximately 3 miles. Go left at Dolbia Hill Road. From south take Rte. 82 to Woodbridge Road. Bring a bag lunch.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14: PIKE PRESERVE

Leader: Ms. Nadie Lowe (447-0816)

Meet at 10 A.M. at the Pike residence on the west side of Pumpkin Hill Road just to the north of the intersection with Lambtown Road.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28: ALTSCHUL PRESERVE

Leaders: Mrs. Penni Sharp (484-0134)

Mrs. Susan Hughes (661-1574)

Meet at 10 A.M. at junction of Riverbank Road and June Road. We will enter the Altschul Preserve at the trail head on Dundee Road for those who know the area and wish to meet there.

